Interview with Robert A. Lincoln

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project Information Series

ROBERT A. LINCOLN

Interviewed by: G. Lewis Schmidt

Initial interview date: April 19, 1989

Q: This is Lew Schmidt interviewing Bob Lincoln at his home on — what day is this — April 17?

LINCOLN: April 19.

Q: April 19, 1989. Bob, I would like to start out by having you give us a brief background on where you come from, what your background is and what your education is and, finally, how you got into USIA.

After that, I will just let you go on from there. I will take your various assignments in USIA in sequence, and whenever I want to stop you I will raise my finger and ask a question. Okay, go ahead, Bob.

Bio-Sketch: Robert A. Lincoln

LINCOLN: I was born in Walton, New York, which I like to say is the largest town in Delaware County. Walton had 3,000 people. Then I lived sixteen miles away for a number of years in another town called Cannonsville, which had three hundred people, where my

grandfather had established a general store. A rural upbringing is especially useful in the foreign service when you're concerned with under developed countries; the economic and cultural attitudes are similar. I managed to go from that area to Yale, graduated from Yale with a degree in European History, was in the Pacific in World War II, and worked in Madison Avenue in New York City. I may be one of the few lateral entrants in USIA who actually was on Madison Avenue. I was an account executive in a public relations firm. This kind of work is transferable immediately to the information side of USIA.

We had a client in Washington, D.C., the National Association of Electric Companies, with whose lobbying activities we were directly concerned, so I was down here about once every week. I used to stay at the Mayflower. One day I probably had too many martinis at lunch and went over to USIA to see if they were in the least bit interested in somebody with this kind of a background. They said, sure, take our test, and we will run a security clearance on you. Meanwhile, go back to what you were doing. After a couple of months -

Q: I just want to be sure —

LINCOLN: Again, that is the U.S. Information Agency. They had a security clearance run and I somehow or other managed to pass it. I say somehow or other because anybody who is from New York City and who has been working on Madison Avenue with a public relations firm was not necessarily a candidate for quick passage of security clearance. However, I had kept my nose clean for the last ten or fifteen years. I also had in my background the fact that I had been with the Air Corps in World War II. I wasn't a flier — my eyes weren't any good at all — rather, I was a member of the ground section of the Air Corps. I had become a lieutenant with the old Army Airways Communications System. This was back when the Army Air Corps was part of the Army. It was not the Air Force as a separate institution. I think that it became separate a couple of years after World War II. I am not sure about the date. At any rate, I did pass the security clearance and went to the orientation for USIA.

First Post: Damascus, Syria: 1955

My first post was in Damascus, Syria. I think that I was sent to Syria under the traditional military concept: I did not speak French, I did not speak Arabic, and those are the two languages you are most likely to run into out there, but they needed somebody to work in Syria.

Q: What was the year that you went to Syria?

LINCOLN: This was 1955, in the spring. I knew roughly where it was because I had once studied geography and had some maps from National Geographic. Syria was on the eastern end of the Mediterranean. When I went out there I learned, of course, that Syria was over the hill, as it were, from the Lebanon. In those days Lebanon was considered the swinging door on the Near East five-and-dime. We used to go from Syria over the mountains to the Lebanon quite regularly, practically every week, in order to get milk, because you could buy milk in the Lebanon — you couldn't get it up in Syria at all — and also to buy beef and ham. You couldn't buy either in Syria. Nearly everyone there (Syria) was Islamic. Even though their citizenry manufactured some of the finest Arak, which is an alcoholic drink; allied to Pernod, it turns milky- colored when you pour it into water, as you probably know. At any rate, the Syrians produced Arak, but they themselves allegedly didn't buy it. They only sold it to somebody else. Well, I have a feeling that the foreign community in Damascus bought enough of it to support the whole industry in Syria. I don't know about that for a fact. At any rate, about every week or so we went over to the Lebanon in order to get ham and beef, things of that kind, which you just plain couldn't get in Syria. All you could get in Syria, naturally, was lamb — awfully tasty lamb, I might add. I learned all sorts of lamb dishes as a result.

Provided we didn't have enough sense, perhaps, to understand what Syria provided — there was a superb opportunity since we, sitting there in the mid 1950s, had a grandstand seat in history. We were able to watch the tremendous changes going on in the Arab world

at the time, even though Syria subsequently has become a place rather difficult to live in. At that time, although the psychological hardships may have been somewhat noticeable, nevertheless, the physiological hardships were absolutely nil. Our ambassador at the time was a man named James Moose.

Q: How do you spell that?

LINCOLN: M-O-O-S-E, like the animal, and in fact he thought his name so unusual that he had located as many other people as possible, like F-O-X, etc., in the U.S. Foreign Service who had animalistic names. I remember that at one cocktail party when an AID man turned up with a name of this sort Moose said, guess how many else there are like me? Moose carefully clicked them all off. They were all old friends. Moose was an brilliant cynic. He typifies, I think, what probably existed during that time as the absolutely perfect Foreign Service officer. First, he was terribly well educated. Second, he read, wrote and spoke classical Arabic, the language of the country. To find anybody who handles classical Arabic today is almost impossible. He had learned it in the old State Department School in Paris. He was one of the first who went there in, I assume, the 1920s. His cynicism expressed itself in any number of Moosisms which he used to, well, spout as the occasion suggested. I call them Moosisms because I collected them. I was very fortunate, as I said, to work with a man like this. I remember, for example — and we will cite a Moosism here — where a younger officer named Dick Funkhouser, who had been assigned as economics officer to Damascus, came into a staff meeting. This was after Funkhouser had been there several weeks. In the middle of the staff meeting, when he was called on for his comments, he looked up and said, “Mr. Ambassador, I have discovered what is wrong with the Syrians.” A few seconds went by and the ambassador asked, “And what, Mr. Funkhouser, have you discovered?” Funkhouser said — incidentally, he later became an ambassador — Funkhouser said, “The problem with the Syrians is that they have a massive inferiority complex.” There wasn't a sound in the country team meeting for at least thirty seconds. Moose ultimately looked up and said, “No, Mr. Funkhouser, that isn't quite right. The trouble is that they are probably correct.” One day Moose explained the difficulty

of trying to transliterate the Arabic language — again, which he handled extremely well. A man named Jim Akins, who was then a very young assistant economics officer, went in to see Moose. Akins was proud because he, Akins, had just been admitted to the Foreign Service School, the FSI school, in Beirut to study Arabic, and he thought Ambassador Moose would be very pleased with this- that, you know, one of his underlings liked the area so much that he had decided that he would give his career to the Arab world and to the Arabic language. Incidentally, Akins became well known as ambassador twenty or thirty years later in Saudi Arabia. Akins went in to tell Moose about the FSI School and his admission — by the way, I learned about this because I was waiting in an anteroom and when Akins came out he told me all about it. Moose looked at him and said, “Now, what is it you want to see me on today, Mr. Akins?” Akins said, “I wanted to tell you that as of September of this year, I have been accepted into and will enter the FSI school in the Arabic language down in Beirut. What do you think of that?” According to Akins, Moose then looked up and said,"Now, let me see, you are going there in September, and the course will be a little more than a year, eighteen months or so. You are going to come out with probably an R4 and an S3 in the Arabic language. It is extremely difficult. Once you have that R4/S3, you will have the key that opens the door to an empty room.” There used to be a tremendous number of trucks in Syria. At that time they were usually old American trucks because the Syrians, like others in the Arab world, had bought a lot of American automotive equipment in the late 1940s and discovered that it was extremely good. You would see old Dodge cars and Chryslers and Chevrolets and Fords used as dolmush, that is, crowded taxis between Damascus and Beirut. You wondered sometimes how they kept running.

You learned fairly quickly the old American cars were among the few in the world that would go way, way beyond what they were supposed to. Instead of going one thousand miles they would go ten or fifteen or twenty thousand miles without a change of oil. The Arab people learned this fairly quickly. Naturally, there were also a lot of old trucks. There were old Mack trucks. There was any kind of truck. On top of every single one of them

over the cab was a big sign in Arabic. At first I couldn't translate it and then I learned how to. I was told that this was “Inshallah.” This was over the top of every cab of every truck that you saw driving in that area.

Q: I've seen the signs.

LINCOLN: You remember them, too?

Q: Turkey has them, too.

LINCOLN: Turkey has them. Anywhere they use the Arabic script, I suspect. Well, at any rate, Moose said, “This is a good illustration of the fact that you cannot easily translate the Arabic language. What does it mean? Well, we Americans transliterate it, “If God wills.” 'If' is the wrong word, because 'if' to an Arab — there is no such thing. You either do it or you don't. There is no such thing as 'if'.

"'God' — well, 'God' is a transliteration of Allah, but Allah and God are two totally different matters. They may be chiefs of formal religions and all that and they may stem even from the same kind of source, but they are quite different. The concept from the people who follow Islam and the concept from the people who follow Christianity are quite different things. “Then, 'wills'. You know, we as Christians have some sense of free will, Protestants more than the Catholics, but it is there. It isn't that God controls everything you do, but rather that you as an individual have some control over your will. You may decide to a degree what you will do. It will depend on your religion as to whether your decision is completely free or somewhat limited — whereas in Islam there is no such thing as that. Free will doesn't exist. The will is Allah's. Whether or not you decide to do thus and so, something may interfere to prevent that.

“So”, said Moose, “you cannot translate 'Inshallah'. Rather, give it a cultural translation. 'Inshallah' when printed on a sign over the top of a truck cab is what makes it possible for a Syrian driver to pass another Syrian driver at sixty miles an hour on a blind curve.”

Enough of that. I had a tremendous opportunity, in other words, in being in Damascus for my first post. I went out as an information officer and later became Public Affairs Officer, although at that time a relatively young PAO. I was still thirty-three or thirty-four. From Damascus, after three years, I was transferred to Ceylon.

Q: Before we leave Damascus, what was the nature of your program in Syria? I don't know whether we were working on country objectives at that time or not, but if we were did you have any and what were they?

LINCOLN: Well, we should have been working on country objectives. This reminds me somehow, though, of what happened with Bill King, who was PAO in Baghdad at the time. Let me see, was he there then or was he there a few years later? No, he was there at that time, that's right.

Q: He was there at the time.

LINCOLN: In 1958, you recall, there was an anti-western coup in Baghdad which affected us throughout the Arab world. The American military landed in the Lebanon in the month of June. We were up in Syria at the time. He had not filed — that is, King had not filed from USIS Baghdad — his country plan. Finally, the USIA Assistant Director for that area back in USIA got really disturbed about it. He needed something on paper. As I understood it from Bill, the Assistant Director, sent to Bill a telegram: What are your country objectives?

American Troop Landing in Lebanon: 1958

Bill sent back a very quick response which simply said, “Principal country objective: Stay alive.” Well, through a whole lot of events that occurred up in Syria many of our objectives were simply to stay alive. I remember, for example, when the American Marines landed in midsummer 1958 down in the Lebanon. This was the American response to the Baghdad coup, and many of us completely agreed with the landing and thought it very, very sound. After the coup in Baghdad, the U.S. broke off diplomatic relations with Iraq. The whole

question was: How long were we going to survive in the Arab world? Undoubtedly, the most effective thing we could do was a show of strength. The landing of the Marines down in the Lebanon was a show of strength. It was a small matter and not too difficult to do; that was very sensible on the part of the U.S.: do the easy right instead of the hard wrong. Johnny Mecklin at that time was the Time/Life bureau chief in the Lebanon. John sprinted across the beach when the first Marines landed from the Mediterranean. John was quoted in an issue of Time, with everything cleaned up, within a few days. John was quoted, I remember he told me, on what was said when the Chief Marine came in with the U.S. landing craft, beautiful landing craft, better than World War II landing craft because they were newer at this time. The Chief Marine gets out. He calls on his walkie-talkie back to his home ship, “Ranger, this is Fo-ward. Ranger, do ya hear me?”

Ranger apparently called back that they did hear him. So the Marine said, “This is Fo-ward. What the hell?” — because he had been going up and down the beach and all he saw were girls in bikinis and little boys trying to sell popcorn and gum.

As John put it, I probably was the first American correspondent to see this happen. The Marines came in, met no opposition whatsoever. There is the famous story about a parade that was a day late. President Chamoun of the Lebanon held it to display the fact that the Americans supported him. Chamoun was the Christian leader in the Lebanon at the time. The parade was held in Beirut. The U.S. Marines brought out all their heavy equipment. They led with a couple of tanks. In one tank, suddenly, the turret flew open. A Marine stood up, heaved a can of Coca-Cola over to another tank. At that point, the Coca-Cola nearly hit the other tank. But its turret popped up, opened, a Marine reached out, grabbed the can in his right hand, brought it in and closed his turret and that was the end. A marvelous demonstration.

Up in Syria at that time, any number of people in and out of the government quietly said to us — not just a few, but a tremendous number said this — “We are very worried.” Syria

declared an anti-American holiday and closed all the stores. Syrians said, “We are very worried that those Marines might come over the mountain pass.”

Again, I don't like the idea that Americans should have to exist on showing force, but in this case, there is no question but that it worked, because with the Arab world at that time — that isn't necessarily true today — a show of force was the way to get something accomplished. I say that I don't believe it is something that works today on the basis of the American experience of the last three or four years. When we have attempted recently to apply force to Syria, which is much stronger than it was then, and to the Lebanon, it hasn't worked. All you have to do is read in the papers in the last few days about what has occurred between the Christians and the Arabs down there.

This also, I think, illustrates the tremendous difference between the psychological situation, psychological and political, which existed in the fifties as compared to what exists today.At that time the Lebanon still worked as a country on the basis of its having been formed as a buffer by the French during World War II and afterward. The French declared that Lebanon was fifty percent Christian, fifty percent Islam. Therefore, it could exist as a separate country. So long as people said it was fifty percent this and fifty percent that it did exist. I think almost everyone knows today that the percentage of Christians has been fast decreasing. We don't know the exact figures. I would assume, if you took the old boundaries of the country, it is about thirty/seventy today, but that is a pure assumption. I am not sure this is correct at all, but I know the percentage has changed tremendously and that the number of followers of Islam tremendously outnumber the followers of Christianity.

Arab Sense of and Faith in Lessons of History. This is something which the Americans must always keep in mind when they try to deal with the Middle East. The Arabs have a great sense of history, a much greater sense than we have. I recall, for example, when in early 1958 Syria had its first — well, its single — unification with Egypt and they declared themselves the United Arab Republic. At that time, the son of a Syrian who was involved in politics with whom I was discussing this said the following to me.

I asked him, “Why is it that Syria has done this, since I know from talking to a whole lot of you people that you don't really think very highly of the Egyptians?” He said — this is, again, an answer to everything or to so many things — he said, “Because we are quite convinced that within three years we, not the Egyptians, will be running the UAR.”

This same man earlier had said in regard to the Arab/Israeli struggle, we — that is, the Arabs — are going to win this one because, after all, it only took us a hundred years to get rid of the Christian crusaders, and so we will get rid of the Israelis, too. I think that is something which has to be kept in mind also. First, overconfidence, but second, a basic confidence stemming from history.

We as Americans spend too little time rereading history or learning the difficulties that other countries may have faced in the areas. In Syria, Target Audience was the Intellectuals, not the Masses.

Q: While you were in Syria, Bob, were you trying to reach any particular group of people? In your estimation, how much difference did it make whether you reached the ordinary Arab in the street or in the desert, whatever, and how much difference did it make in reaching a certain elite or governing group?

LINCOLN: We were very much trying to reach an elite. That was our whole effort. In the beginning, when I first went there, I found that a most of our program was a mass program. We were trying to work with the newspapers — any kind of newspaper. We had a motorcycle brigade which went out every morning, old Harley Davidsons inherited from World War II, to spread our news releases at, oh, seven o'clock. Since we, as news distributors, had long since been replaced by American wire services, British wire services, French wire services, and so forth and so on, there was no sense in doing that sort of thing any longer.

At any rate, when I first went there the effort was a mass effort. It just plain didn't work because in the Arab countries, as so often happens in underdeveloped countries, the masses don't control total opinion in the country. The governments control the opinion.

Q: They don't read very well. There are many of them who are illiterate.

LINCOLN: What was the percentage of literacy at that time? I think it was forty-eight percent in Syria.

Q: Hmmm.

LINCOLN: By the way, that was a governmental figure. The actual literacy rate could have been lower. I say could have been, because I don't even recall now. The figure I am giving is based on whether a man could write his name or not. So he can write his name. Can he read a newspaper? Who knows? Well, very quickly in the mid-1950s — 1955 this was — by the end of the year our whole operation had been regeared toward trying to reach the governmental, political that is, intellectual, particularly the academic elite.

Did we succeed? Well, I am afraid we didn't. Part of the reason we didn't succeed come from the fact that we as Americans never were capable of readjusting to the Islamic way of thinking. A lot of the material which we wrote didn't appeal to the Islamic audience. I remember, for example, the Syrian minister of information at one time, who came from Aleppo, saying to me, at the time we Americans were trying to publicize Eisenhower's atoms for peace proposal. Do you recall that? It was an intellectual exercise and it made a lot of sense to a western mind. The minister of information said to me, “The problem with you Americans is that you assume anything which is a fact stems from scientific proof. People in a country like ours don't work from that assumption at all. You have got to learn that you are operating in our country, not yours. In our country we instead feel that whatever a man believes becomes a fact to him. That is the basis on which you should appeal to him — belief, not scientific proof.”

Q: So how did you — what did you do to try to reach the intellectuals, if that is the basis of their comprehension? Did you have any success in reaching them and what did you do to try to reach them?

LINCOLN: Well, I will describe what we tried to do. I think that our mechanics were fairly correct. Our mechanics came first from changes in the press operation. We stopped just wildly distributing news releases and counting out how many were used and how many weren't, because that wasn't what affected people's minds. Rather, we spent our time cultivating the most important media elements that were in Syria at the time. This included not only all the newspapers, but also the Syrian radio station. You tried to cultivate, spend time with, the people who edited those operations and also those who reported for them, working on the possibility that, if you had made a small dent in their views, then you would affect over a longer range the kinds of things they published and didn't publish.

We made sure that everything we got in the wireless file in those days — we were getting the wireless file every night at approximately midnight — everything we got in the wireless file of consequence to them was given to them, but quite often we would send it to them with a personal note or something rather than just use a mass mailing or mass delivery.

Q: Did they use much of your stuff?

LINCOLN: The actual use of our material decreased. On the other hand, the influence of that material, I like to think, probably increased. We also did not deal at all in trying to publish amass magazine. Rather, we tried to put out certain things that would reach certain groups. First, for example, I remember spending a lot of time at the Syrian University, which was the principal advanced educational institution in the country, trying to find out how it had been formed and how the professors there got to think the way they did. Most of them came from backgrounds which were not necessarily colonial influenced or originated; again, Syria at that time was in transition. Many of the people who then ran

Syrian University were graduates of American University of Beirut. Twenty years later this wouldn't have been true, but then it was true.

Arab Hatred of Israel Was a Dominant Factor

Q: In those days how much did the problem of Israel and the Arab hatred of Israel influence the feelings of the Syrians and your relationship with them?

LINCOLN: It probably was the first thing that influenced them. It was more important than anything else. I remember, for example, the fact that it was impossible to carry on any kind of conversation with a Syrian without the question of Israel coming up. I also remember the kind of staff I had. Half of the people who worked for me in USIS were Palestinians, because they were better educated, who had left when — well, after the 1948 decision of the United Nations.

Anwar Hadid, who is in the United States today,* was the chief national employee in USIS at the time. He came from — I couldn't say what city it was. I have forgotten, but he had been in the Palestinian judiciary. He spoke about three languages. He handled English bilingually with Arabic and his French was very good. I am not sure if he handled any others. I don't know whether he had any time to. Palestinian beginnings extended down to the lower positions. One of the major drivers, I remember, was a fellow who came from Palestine. Most of them couldn't get jobs in Syria and that's why they worked for us. Some of them loved us dearly and wanted to come to the United States. Many of them just quietly looked at us and thought, you are responsible for the whole works, let's face it. I would say they felt that way underneath but I don't know. I could never find out for sure.

By the way, it is very interesting to somebody who knows something about the Middle East. Oh, one other little item I remember. This was when a captain in the Army, the American Army — he became a major while he was there — was on the Israeli-Syrian mixed armistice commission, which the United States backed and which I believe was being run by the United Nations at the time. Every few weeks he would come up from the

border and give Ambassador Moose a fill-in on how things were going. He had been shot at and everything else.

I remember his telling several of us very proudly what had happened at the time he was transferred from the commission. He walked into Moose's office, the ambassador's office, and said, “Mr. Ambassador, I am about to leave this area and when I go back to the United States everybody is going to accuse me of being anti-Semitic.” Moose looked at him, rather startled, “Do you mean anti-Semitic in the American sense?” “No”, the major said, “I am going to be anti both these sides of Semites.”

Q: Both these what?

LINCOLN: Both these sides of semites. This, again, is an important matters, I think, for Americans who are trying to deal with the area to recognize. There is a closer relationship historically and philosophically between the Hebrew religion and Islam than there is between Christianity and those religions.

Q: Not only that, but there probably is a cross-fertilization genetically, too, between them. They are off-shoots of the same tribes.

LINCOLN: Absolutely. Well, let's take something simple like the languages. I recall many years later — this was in Turkey - getting to know quite well the Israeli ambassador. He was very, very competent. He spoke Hebrew, of course, but he also spoke Arabic fluently, and you could hardly tell the difference. To an American ear, actually, any number of the words and forms of the two languages are the same. Each, by the way - and this is something that most Americans don't seem to be aware of, although it is pretty simple — is a language which runs from right to left, and each is written with a script.

Anybody, for example, who looks at my name in Arabic will find — anybody who speaks Hebrew and sees my name in Arabic will have no trouble at all saying oh, yeah, that's Lincoln.

Q: I don't know how many of the far eastern languages are like that. Now, of course, the Japanese and Chinese are right-to-left. They don't do it so much anymore, but that was the old traditional way. You will find that the Japanese magazines to the Americans open at the back and not the front.

LINCOLN: By the way, just to throw in a mechanical comment again, it was very helpful to us when we were publishing things in booklet form — for example, the Eisenhower message on atoms-for-peace. On the back, on every page, English was on the right-hand side and Arabic was on the left. To read the Arabic you started from the back of the booklet and went forward. To read the English you went from the front and worked to the back. That is a good demonstration of the fact that I still think in American terms rather than Arab terms, I regret. It is very hard to change.

Effectiveness of USIS Effort in Syria In 1950s Was, If at All, Only Transitory

Q: You said that you didn't think you were terribly successful in Syria. I know there has been a lot of speculation in the agency as to how successful we really were in much of the Arab world at all. Do you think you made any impact whatsoever?

LINCOLN: What impact we made on Syria at the time was among certain numbers of people in the media, the upper levels of the media, I think, and the universities and the government and elsewhere. Why do I say that this was not a permanent impact? Every one of them is out of the picture today. There isn't a single person who was selected then who is involved with the government or with education today, not one.

Q: Well, that is true in more countries than one in the Middle East. So do you have anything else you want to comment on about Syria before we move on to the next episode in your career?

LINCOLN: Another Moosism. He said, “Every word in Arabic has five different meanings, one of which is a word for camel, and the last of which is exactly the opposite to the first.”

He knew how difficult it was to comprehend the Arab and the Arab way of doing things. What I am leading up to is that we as Americans work on the assumption that, since we have solved so many problems in the United States, we can solve all problems as they arise elsewhere in the world, in the Middle East and other countries.

This raises the question as to whether we Americans should decide pretty flatly that all problems are soluble. There are certain ones which can't be solved. It may be that our longstanding efforts to try to solve the basic problems in the Middle East were faulty and that we might have been better off over the long run if we had just stood aside and let things happen and then entered in at an appropriate time. What is an appropriate time? Darned if I know.

Reasons for Breakup of the United Arab Republic

Q: This does raise one other question which I just thought of now. The so-called United Arab Republic certainly fell apart as far as any effective operation is concerned. What do you think was the cause of that? Was it the arrogance of Nasser or was it just an incompatibility of the two Arab groups, or what was it?

LINCOLN: Oh, I think there were two things. First, the Syrians discovered after a matter of six months that they couldn't really run Egypt. Second, they resented it terribly. The Egyptians, meanwhile, discovered that they couldn't run Syria very well, so they said the heck with all of it, what an awful waste of time it is. That is about it. This doesn't suggest that the Arabs won't get together occasionally when forced by some outside force to cooperate. That is how the UAR came about. It looked as if Egypt, with the UAR, should try to achieve leadership in the Arab world — which Egypt has tried to achieve ever since — and the easiest way to do it was by taking Syria under its wing; Syria ran the eastern part the Arab world and Egypt was running the western part, as it were. I am oversimplifying, of course.

Both Egypt and Syria discovered that it just plain didn't work, and so they dropped the whole idea. There was a period also, you recall, when Syria formed a unification with Jordan, which is unbelievable. If there are two countries which are totally separate — well, Jordan didn't even exist until the British created it. If there are two countries which are separate in their ultimate goals and desires, it is Syria and Jordan.

Q: Now, let me check this recorder out to make sure we are recording before we go on to the next place.

Assignment to Ceylon: 1958

Q: Okay. So what year did you leave Syria and where did you go then?

LINCOLN: Well, it was in July or August. It must have been August, as I recall it, of 1958. We went from Syria to Ceylon on assignment. Ceylon was then Ceylon. This was before it was Sri Lanka. It sounded like a very interesting assignment. It was an easy assignment from the standpoint of living, because you lived extremely well there. Ceylon was one of the old colonial countries the British had run. The house that I lived in, I remember, was an old British colonial house. Most ceilings were twelve feet high. Although the house wasn't air conditioned, it was cool. One room was air conditioned. Its ceiling was very high. There was a Columbo editor, I remember, who used to love to come there because it was the coolest place in Ceylon — the coolest place in the city of Colombo, at least. Another thing that was good about the housing was the existence of the Eighty Club. A block away, the Eighty Club was the old British/Ceylonese colonial club. The British had created the darned thing and the Ceylonese were taking it over, quietly, of course. At that time, in the latter part of the 1950s, the Ceylonese in the Eighty Club were mainly people who had been trained by the British.

For example, Dudley Senanyake, who had been for a long time the leader of the United National Party, was one of the prominent members. A man named Shirley Amerasinghe was a prominent member. I used to play a lot of tennis with Shirley.

Q: We had better spell out these names. We had better go back to Senanyake first -

LINCOLN: Well, Dudley Senanyake. I will go into Bandaranaike later. Dudley Senanyake — that was S-E-N-A-N-A-Y-A-K-E as I remember it. I am not sure of my spelling. Shirley Amerasinghe. Shirley is a strange male first name, but he was quite male. He was a superb tennis player. He used to beat the hell out of me, I remember, regularly. Amerisinghe was A-M-E-R-A-S-I-N-G-H-E, probably originally an Indian name. I am not totally sure of that. The spelling of different names was a real problem, but you learned fairly rapidly how to do it. The question was whether you should attempt to do it before you went there. One American ambassador, you remember, did attempt to. He shouldn't have. He made a terrible mistake. He should have waited until he learned something about it. His problem was with S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. S.W.R.D. was Solomon West Ridgeway Bandaranaike, who had gone to Oxford and had been the leader of the political union when he was a student up there. A fine mind, absolutely superb, and he was a marvelous political manipulator. He discovered fairly early on that he should tweak the noses of the British, the French, the Americans, etc., that this would achieve more than anything else he did. Bandaranaike was B-A-N-D-A-R-A-N-A-I-K-E as I remember it. That may or may not be right. He was assassinated while I was there. He became prime minister and then was assassinated. When he became prime minister he was the first left-of-center prime minister Ceylon had ever had. Up until that point the various people had been British oriented, and I don't recall if any was a Tamil. I doubt if any were, but an awful lot of the people who ran governmental institutions were Tamil-oriented rather than Singhalese.

Q: So actually Tamil is by ethnic origin?

LINCOLN: Yes. In other words, if you went back three generations the family came from southern India, without any question.

Early Political Polarization of Tamils and Singhalese

Q: Had they polarized at that time to any extent?

LINCOLN: Yes. They had polarized and in 1957 there had been the Tamil-Singhalese outbreak. I don't remember how many were killed, not as many as have been killed today, but there were tremendous differences between the Tamils and Singhalese. At that time the Tamils ran many things in the government which they don't run today. At that time — this is interesting, too — the man who most recently has been prime minister was the second leader of the United National party, so he is quite aware of the long history of Tamil-Singhalese strife. Before Mrs. Bandaranaike became prime minister, another socialist-nationalist leader briefly held the position. She held the power, of course. That she took over was of great benefit as far as I personally was concerned, in that I was one of the few Americans who knew her.

It happened that she didn't live too far away from me. She had been to our house and I had been to hers. While it sounds logical enough, it was relatively unusual at the time because westerners did not normally know anyone but pro-western Ceylonese.

Renegotiation of VOA Treaty in Ceylon

Subsequently, when she had become prime minister, the U.S. was trying to renegotiate the old Voice of America treaty with Ceylon. The original treaty was then — would it have been thirty years old?

Q: I thought I heard the recorder click, but I didn't. It is still going, so go ahead.

LINCOLN: I am delighted to have this time delay. I think that the old treaty with Ceylon in which three Collins 30 kW transmitters were involved was thirty years old and, therefore, we had to negotiate a new one. Under the old one in Ceylon, we had a resident engineer from Voice of America. The Ceylonese relied heavily on his advice and his day-to-day operational techniques.There were three old Collinses which we had installed. Radio Ceylon had a Marconi transmitter of 100 kW. We had worked out quietly — I think the engineer arranged all this; I had nothing to do with it, I know — an arrangement whereby Radio Ceylon for broadcasting used the 30 kW Collinses and we used the 100 kW Marconi transmitter to broadcast northward into India. All of this was to our benefit. It has now been forgotten because it was so long ago. I am sure that the Marconi 100 kW transmitter is no longer in existence. Again, we had a special permit to have the Voice of America engineer assigned there under diplomatic immunity. So, we renegotiated the contract and we had just about completed the negotiations when I returned on assignment to the United States, after having finished three years in Ceylon. I met Ed Murrow, the new USIA director, because he was directly interested in what was happening to the agreement.

Q: Was the new transmitter agreement reached while you were still there, because Henry Loomis, head of VOA, went over and hit it off very well with Mrs. Bandaranaike?

LINCOLN: We had reached an agreement with the radio station and this went up to Mrs. Bandaranaike, and she had decided to approve it at the time I left. In other words, it had been ninety-five percent settled, but Henry went to Ceylon — very sensibly — at the suggestion of Murrow. That would be early 1961.

Q: Well, our overall USIS program in Ceylon was to attempt to reach the upper levels — academic, government, media and so forth — rather than a mass program.

Changes Taking Place in Power Structure in Ceylon

LINCOLN: Were we successful or not? Yes, I think we were in the sense that tremendous changes were taking place in Ceylon at the time.

As I said, tremendous changes were taking place in Ceylon at the time. We saw the discontinuation of power on the part of people whom the British had trained when Ceylon was a colony, and the taking over by people, some of whom were British educated and some of whom were European educated, but all of whom were nationalists. They were Ceylon first, Singhalese first, and western second. I say that this was a tremendous change because of the suddenness of the wrenching that went on. You saw the United National Party losing all power and the socialist-nationalist party taking over.

Before Mrs. Bandaranaike became prime minister, another leader of the socialist-nationalist party was prime minister. In less than a year, she took his place. In her government, the foreign minister was Felix Bandaranaike, her nephew. He was often accused of being a communist. Was he?

Whether or not he was, the communists generally supported him, and there is no question but that he felt Marxism better than anything else for Ceylon. In the various elements of the government you saw the promotion of people who were left, not because they happened to think that this was the best thing perhaps, but left because this was a way of bothering the west. It was a way of showing independence.

In many cases Mrs. Bandaranaike herself did that sort of thing. I recall the comment of the then Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon the night that Mrs. Bandaranaike became prime minister. I was talking with him at a reception. It was up in Paradiniya, where the university was, the University of Ceylon. I asked — he was a former gynecologist and had delivered two of Mrs. Bandaranaike's children and knew her very well — “What do you think of this?” He, incidentally, was a United National Party senator. He was a right of center, pro-British. He said, “Mrs. Bandaranaike is a hard-headed, straightforward, stupid housewife.” Now, that was the typical attitude of people who represented the colonial

element of Ceylon and it probably was exactly the opposite of the attitude which anybody who was trying to get new things accomplished in Ceylon favored. Therefore, even though we opposed, quietly perhaps, leftist influence in the government, we were able to maintain good relations with the new government.

Effectiveness of Exchange Program

As an illustration I remember the tremendous effectiveness of the educational exchange program which we were conducting at the time. I was very fortunate in becoming vice chairman of the Fulbright Commission. One of the men — I will use this as an illustration, not necessarily typical, because we were not always this successful — who went on a grant to the United States we hadcarefully gotten to know quite well over a period of three or four months before he went.

He was the leader of a pro-national Ceylonese element. He himself held the second position in the Foreign Ministry. After he came back from his grant to the United States, I spent a lot of time with him. He was a favorite of Mrs. Bandaranaike. He was immensely impressed by what he found in the U. S., because so much of it was contrary to what he had heard before. We weren't terrible capitalist ogres after all.

Q: Was he pro-leftist oriented prior to his visit to the states?

LINCOLN: Very much so. His orientation within Ceylon when he returned remained pro-national, without any question, but at the same time his thinking about Marxism, state socialism and so forth and so on had changed quite a bit. Is he still involved in government today? I haven't any idea, not the slightest, but I remember his influence at the time was immense. He had his own personal following. We achieved with one grant more than we could have with a whole year's program of media operations. Another thing that happened was our getting close to all the editors over at The Times of Ceylon group. There were two major newspaper groups at that time in Colombo. One was Lakehouse, which today is paramount. The other was The Times of Ceylon group. The chief editor of the English

language Times of Ceylon was not really a Ceylonese. He was a Goanese from Goa in India.His name was Tori de Souza.

Q: Was he partly Portuguese, do you know?

LINCOLN: Probably, probably. I remember once coming back from a day spent beyond Kandy in the mountains with him. I had gotten a deep tan that day. He was dark-skinned but he had gotten a tan on the dark skin. I recall his saying, “The sun was so strong today that even I got a tan.” Tori and I became close friends. I think he is dead today. He was one of the more interesting, highly intelligent people I knew when I was there.

Tori was a great cricket player. One night he - well, we got a little bit fried together and he and two or three of his assistants invited me to join their squad. I was braggadocio saying that any baseball hitter could hit a cricket throw. They said, “Okay, come out and play with us tomorrow.”

Well, a baseball player could. Not only that, but American baseball players are very good at fielding and most cricket players are not as skilled. So as a result, I ended up playing silly mid-on for the Times of Ceylon cricket team. Silly mid-on is the fielding position close in. It is roughly the equivalent of a baseball short-stop if the short-stop were playing halfway between his normal spot and the pitcher's position — halfway closer to the batter, in other words. Silly mid-on had to handle anything hot that was hit out. Again, with American experience, you could handle it. You knew what to do with the darned ball.

So I had a lot of fun playing cricket when I learned how. I was then — let me see, I hadn't hit forty yet so I could still play cricket. The Times of Ceylon group published an English language daily which had the smallest circulation of all of their papers, a Ceylonese daily newspaper which probably had the biggest circulation, and a Tamil newspaper. Unfortunately for us and for their future they probably had more influence on the public from the English language and the Tamil dailies than from the Singhalese. The people who

ran The Times group leaned toward the west, and darn it, it didn't work. The people who ran Lakehouse leaned toward the west, too; but they didn't lean as far.

Q: Did the government under Mrs. Bandaranaike ever attempt any overt censorship of the press?

LINCOLN: During the time that I was there under her, no. No. They were, of course, able to censor their own radio, but it was a government-run radio operation. They were pretty darned careful about that.

Literary Levels in Ceylon

Q: What do you think was the general level of literacy among the masses of the people?

LINCOLN: Much higher than it was in the Arab countries. The educational system in Ceylon in any language had been established when it was a colony, and it was a pretty effective one no matter how you look at it. Now, again, I don't remember the figures, but I would assume it was close to sixty percent. It was quite high. Among the people that we dealt with — we were dealing with the leaders - there was never a question of literacy, not the slightest. There was no difficulty whatsoever. Ceylon's higher literacy rate made it an easier country to operate in, of course.

Q: Of course.

LINCOLN: It made a whole lot of difference. In Ceylon you could go to cities, towns out in the country and speak and you didn't have to have a translator with you. You could often ask somebody who was a village schoolmaster or what have you and he would be just as good as anyone from your staff, time and again. There was probably too large a percentage of people of Tamil background on the USIS staff. You naturally would lean toward hiring somebody who was a Tamil because time and again he was better in English

than the Singhalese was.I hope — I don't know today — that gradually we have overcome that by changes in the staff. I have no way of knowing.

There were some other fascinating things that went on, though. This was a great country to be in.

Anecdotes of Ceylon

Q: Do you have any anecdotes you would like to put forth on Ceylon before we pass on to your next assignment?

LINCOLN: Some hilarious ones. I remember one instance involving an official named Abeykoon, who was the chief of police. The chief of police didn't mean just chief of police of a city. He was, in effect, the head of the FBI for the country of Ceylon. I had only been there six or eight months and he came to the house privately and talked to me. He wanted to be sure that nobody else was around and that my room wasn't bugged. He said, Mr. Lincoln, I have to tell you something serious. We have a new Egyptian ambassador. I said, yes, I know — he was a former general from Egypt. Abeykoon said, “He has given to me just yesterday a sheaf of papers about three-quarters of an inch thick swearing that you are actually a member of the CIA.”

That was what I had been wrongly traced as by the suspicious Syrians in Damascus. Yes, I did realize it but I didn't think it would follow me this far.

Q: It is an assumption in many countries, particularly in the east and far east.

LINCOLN: Yes. Well, fortunately Abeykoon rejected the whole story and quietly told the Egyptian ambassador no, we have investigated this and we don't believe it is true. Another tale concerns the admiral of the navy. Ceylon didn't have a terribly large navy, of course, four or five ships. The admiral was a delightful fellow. He was a good looking man. His English was impeccable and so forth; he was obviously fun to sit and talk with. At one time

he said, politics in Ceylon is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians. I remember the quote because Bill Handley was then the assistant director for Near East and South Asia for USIA, was out on a visit and I happened to have had a reception where Bill heard it from the admiral. Handley never forgot it.

The admiral represented the British-oriented element in Ceylon. He later, three or four years later, after I left , was involved with several other men in an unsuccessful coup to overthrow the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike. It didn't work and I don't know what has finally happened to him. I have no idea. Another story — our ambassador at the time, and he was excellent, was a man named Bernard Gufler. I got to know Guff quite well because he and I made a project of walking to the airport outside of Colombo. It was probably six or seven miles out or maybe eight or ten.Our system of walking was to use his car for a certain distance and get out at the spot we had last walked to. We would walk the next mile or so and his car would come and pick us up. Then a week later we would walk the new distance. We never made the airport. As I said, Guff was an awfully good ambassador. He was a trained stylemaster who, although I don't really believe that he knew south Asia or knew the languages, had a sense of what to do and what not to do. That is about it. He was awfully tough to work with. Some of the people on the staff absolutely hated him and some liked him, but again he was an individual and always interesting. He would review anything you turned out if he found it of interest and would talk to you about it a day to two later.

He was concerned with the overall problem of public affairs which so many ambassadors may not be. It meant a lot to him. He spent more time with people from USIS, I think, particularly those in the cultural side, than he did with some of his own staff who were on the political side.

Q: You spoke earlier of your exchange program out there. Did you have a very large one?

LINCOLN: No, because a country like Ceylon is a small country. We didn't have a big program in anything, let's face it. I am trying to remember how many people were there - myself, one cultural affairs officer, one information officer, an executive secretary, and that was about it. We had a four-person staff in Ceylon. I don't know how many national employees there were, let's say ten or fifteen.

Our total educational exchange program was proportionately nowhere near as large as a lot of other countries may have had.

Q: I would like to ask you one other question before we pass along. I was very interested to find that in a lot of — not a lot, but in two or three southeast Asian countries — the USIS operation was exceedingly well known and that it had in the minds not only of the people but a number of the government executives a place almost comparable to the embassy. What was your experience in Ceylon?

LINCOLN: Probably true. It hadn't been true up in Syria. I would say it was probably true, and this may account for the fact that the ambassador, Guff, spent so much time with his USIS people. He was personally well known and quite a close friend of the USIS librarian, a woman named Margaret Gunei-akne, British by origin, married to a south Asian national. Her husband's name was Chandra. He had originally been a leader in the Congress party in India. At some time or another when he was very young, he had come down to Ceylon to lead affairs there.

Guff became very close to the two of them. He used to go hunting with Chandra and he spent a lot of time with Margaret over at the USIS library, not a little bit of time but a tremendous amount. Also, he found wonderful a USIS cultural assistant named Diana Captain, whose family was from India; Captain is an old name from Bombay. Her father had come down to Colombo in the 1920s or early 1930s. He had established a textile plant. She went to work for USIS.

Well, she was worth her weight in gold. She had more contacts up and down in Ceylon — for example, the head of the Trotskyite Marxist party was an old friend of hers whom she called Uncle So-and-so when speaking to him on the telephone. The governor general of Ceylon was Uncle Oliver. Political leaders right and left were her friends; so were media executives, and so on.Although she worked for USIS, Diana spent a tremendous amount of time doing special things for Ambassador Gufler and that was good. We never stood in her way — just the opposite. She is still there, occasionally sending us high tea from Ceylon. Originally, of course, and when I was first there, the high tea from Kandy and upward geographically grew on plantations owned by the British. They were nationalized by Mrs. Bandaranaike. She started the nationalization in 1960 and by 1964 or 1965, after I left, she had pretty much taken over the operation. The high tea I get today is government-owned tea.

Q: Well, then, where did you go from there? Did you come back to the agency then after that?

1961: Lincoln Returns to Agency Assignment: Program Coordinator for Near East and South Asia

LINCOLN: Yes, I came back to the agency.

Q: What year was that?

LINCOLN: This was 1961, early 1961. I came back because Bill King, who was then the USIA Assistant Director for the Near East and South Asia, had decided that I would be a good program coordinator and I thought that was peachy. I was a Class 3 officer and area program coordinator was a fairly large job.

Because of the negotiations under the VOA agreement, I managed to meet USIA Director Ed Murrow the second day I was back in Washington. Tom Sorensen was then a Deputy Director. He was an old friend, whom I had known years before when he was operating

in the Near East. I remember walking into his office in Washington and sort of laughing, pointing and saying, “Tom Sorensen, what the hell are you doing as Deputy Director of the Agency? He roared with laughter, too, and we sat down and hashed things over. It was he who told Ed about the VOA agreement. As I said, the following day I found myself spending a half-hour or an hour with Murrow discussing mainly that but other program matters as well.

I then went off on home leave. I had been on home leave about two weeks when I got a call from Bill Weathersby, who was then the USIA Director of Personnel. Bill, you recall, had been appointed before Murrow came in, but Murrow wanted him to stay on for a while. Weathersby was one of the few USIA personnel people who came from the Foreign Service. He ended up in the personnel job not because of a long personnel background but because he would know the problems of the foreign service and a lot of the people, as well.

Q: With L.K. Little approval?

LINCOLN: It was L.K. Little who — go ahead.

Q: Go ahead.

LINCOLN: It was L.K. Little who appointed Bill. You are absolutely correct. Again, that was one or two years - you would know better than I — before Ed Murrow's time?

Q: It was about — L.K. Little had been the personnel director for some time.

LINCOLN: L.K. had been personnel director, I guess, for about five or six years and finally he decided that he was old enough to retire and he was looking for somebody who would replace him. He had very great faith in Bill Weathersby. Weathersby had been promised a position in the field and he didn't relish very much stopping for a couple of years to be

personnel director, but he was finally prevailed upon to take it over, so he was personnel director at that time, replacing L.K.

Q: I gather you knew L.K. very well.

LINCOLN: I didn't. I know the name. Bill has talked to me since then and said that he took the job at first because L.K. put so much pressure on him. I think he liked L.K., from the sound, as well. Then when Murrow came in Weathersby once again wanted to move into the field. Murrow prevailed on him to stay for one or two years.

Q: He stayed about two years in the job./

LINCOLN: Yes, and all of this worked out so well that, as you recall, Bill later became ambassador in Sudan and what have you. He is one of the relatively few people of USIA career background, foreign service career background with USIA, who entered the ambassadorial ranks.

Diverted from Intended Assignment To Department of State Operations Center

At any rate, I was out in California on leave. I had been out there for roughly two weeks. The U.S. meanwhile had tried the Bay of Pigs adventure, and, as you will recall, it didn't go over so well. I remember watching it on television and thinking — I didn't know the Cuban area at all — but thinking, on the basis of work with other countries, lesser developed than the United States, that the invasion couldn't possibly work. The masses of Cuban people there would support their leader rather than a foreign leader, and our hope of getting mass support for the American/Cuban adventure would fall flat. That is exactly what occurred.

It was within a few days afterward that Weathersby called and said, “Will you come back to Washington?” So I came back to Washington. He wouldn't tell me exactly what it was for, but said, “This is worthwhile. Come on back. You will want to do it.”

When I came back I found myself appointed as the USIA representative on the original State Department Center. When I say “original”, I'm referring to the way it was set up at the time. It was a top-level task-force enterprise in various policy operations. For example, when the Berlin Wall was built, we formed a task force soon afterward to determine what could be done on the part of the United States. The CIA representative was Allen Dulles and he had Cord Meyer with him. The State Department representative was Dean Rusk. The USIA representative, my job, was me, and this was hilarious, because these men, let us say, were somewhat higher ranking than I, and also a bit older and more experienced. I was a kid, but it was a fascinating situation to be thrown into.

Fortunately, the public representative who had been brought in by CIA for that particular meeting was a Earl Newsom. He had been retained by CIA privately to raise money for RadioFree Europe and Radio Liberty. Those were the days in which the bulk of their funds came from CIA and the government. It was only later that they became open-ended and overt rather than covert.

Earl Newsom had once employed Steve Fitzgerald, who ran the public relations firm I worked with on Madison Avenue. I knew a number of people at Newsom's firm. Newsom and I and one other person, I can't remember who it was now, were appointed to write up the recommendations of the committee afterward. Nobody else wanted to do it. They figured that we were used to handling typewriters or pens and paper or something like that, so we got the job. We did it in a matter of hours.

The basic recommendation from this task force was that the vice president rather than the president immediately go to Germany and make statements in behalf of the United States asserting a fairly strong position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. To be in the original Operations Center was a fascinating occupation. However, after about six months it was fairly clear that the one-time importance of the operations center was decreasing very rapidly.

Individual State Department elements such as Europe or the Far East or Near East and South Asia must have resented very much the existence of this organization. The head of it was Ted Achilles, who had been a counselor at the State Department, but after six months it was pretty obvious that it was going down into almost nothing. It just didn't have any influence anymore.

We had beautiful offices, I might add. I recall, for example, having one with windows. That is fairly unusual, kind of hard to get. I talked with Tom Sorensen: He was my principal contact back at USIA headquarters. I told him it was time to get out of the Operations Center. USIA no longer should be represented at State in that fashion. We instead should send to State individuals who were USIA Assistant Directors, like yourself for example — the Assistant Director for the Far East if it were a far eastern matter, for Europe if it were a European matter and so forth. There should not be a permanent USIA man at State.

I shortly came back to USIA and worked as a special assistant — I think it was a created job — for Sorensen for a few months. No one know what to do with me and that was about it.

Return to Near East and South Asia as Deputy Assistant Director

After that I went down and worked under King as the deputy for Near East and South Asia. That turned out also to have been very fortunate for me, but not necessarily for King, because Bill's health wasn't so hot. He was really running down at that point.

Q: I am not quite sure what was wrong, but he didn't seem to be feeling too well.

LINCOLN: I remember one instance where he flew out on a trip and suddenly we got the word from Cyprus that he was in the hospital. Why was he in the hospital? Let me see now, he was having an operation performed, very unexpectedly. Nobody knew how long he'd be there, so the only solution was that I should take a plane out. He was in the hospital for a week or two. Bill was one of those men who aged five or ten years before he

should have. He had been extremely competent. You are very familiar, I'm sure, with his products when he was a senior Associated Press reporter in Europe in World War II. He wrote a marvelous book which is in all the USIS libraries as an illustration.

He had known Murrow quite well and Murrow used to call him the Senator — you remember Bill's famous imitation of a southern senator?

1963 Illness of Bill King, Assistant Director for Near East Results in Lincoln Assuming Assistant Director Position

At any rate, because of Bill's illnesses, he couldn't perform the way he had performed when he was younger. Again by luck, I was forced to take over a whole lot of things. I remember on a particular Saturday morning — this was approximately two or three weeks before we were going to have congressional hearings on the USIA budget before Congressman Rooney. I was called to Murrow's office talk to Murrow about it. He had called me on the phone. At the end of the face-to-face conversation, he looked at me and he said, “You mean that you are going to handle the hearings on this?” I said, “Absolutely, I have to. Fred Hawkins, our budget man, and I will do it.” Fred was very, very good, by the way. Murrow commented, “All right, if you are going to do it we will find another job for Bill. You find one. It will be up to you and others. Come in with it Monday morning. You will be the Assistant Director for the Near East and South Asia. If you come in on Saturday I guess that's worth it.” That was in, let's see, it was late 1963 or early 1964, as I recall it.

Q: That was early 1963, because Bill was operated on in October of 1963 and never really effectively came back to the Agency.

LINCOLN: Then it was early 1963. Lionel Mosley by then had taken over from Bill Weathersby as director of personnel for USIA.

Q: I have forgotten just what year that was.

LINCOLN: Mose was superb, as you recall. I remember getting in touch with him on the weekend and discussing what we would do. It happened that USIA could very quickly have a PAO opening in Karachi for Pakistan, which was a very good job.

Q: For whom?

LINCOLN: For Bill King.

Q: Oh, for Bill King, yes.

LINCOLN: Public Affairs Officer, Pakistan. It was a large country and Bill became in no time flat PAO Pakistan.

Recollections of Edward R. Murrow on the Job

Although he often looked morose, Murrow was a superb and lively conversationalist. Probably he had greatest principles of any director we have ever had in USIA. Besides being terribly well known he had the greatest popular appeal. He has been accused very often, as you know, of not being a good administrator. I would question that, and let me explain my reason. His system of administration was to appoint a man to a job and tell him to do it; if after a few months it turned out that he couldn't do it, Murrow would quietly remove him. But, he, Murrow, could never face up to a man he was going to move off to something else. He always had someone else do it. He hated to tell a guy to change.

Q: Well, I think Ed really didn't want to involve himself with the nitty gritty of administration, anyway.

LINCOLN: Exactament.

Q: At the same time he knew what was going on. I think his greatest strength was that he relied on the people whom he trusted and left to them the job to do, while he was the one who was the prestige man up front with the ideas, and that is the way he worked. It is true

that he didn't get into the nitty gritty of administration, but I don't think there is anything wrong with that.

LINCOLN: I don't, either. I totally agree with that approach. This, again, goes back to a basic in administration. You are only as good as the people you appoint under you. You can't be better, it is totally impossible. If you have no sense of whom to appoint to jobs and whom to rely on and whom not, you get out. You just won't be able to do it. I remember some quotes from Murrow. You have got more than I have, but I remember several that struck me at the time as being just marvelously Murrow. One of them occurred one morning when we were waiting at the old 1776 (Pennsylvania) headquarters (of USIA) to go up in the elevator. The usual crowd was there. It was a few minutes before nine and USIA was to open at nine. There must have been a hundred or a hundred and fifty people waiting. We had two measly elevators. Sometimes you waited ten or fifteen minutes trying to get into them. On this particular morning Murrow was with us when we were waiting. He was not the kind who would use a private elevator. He wasn't built that way. Finally, after making no progress whatsoever, he looked up and said, so that at least people ten persons away could hear him, “I think that our only solution is to turn the building over on its side.” Then there was another remark — you remember this, I'm sure — which concerned the difficulty that he had trying to change personnel underneath him, way down. You couldn't get rid of anyone. Finally, after about six months he said, “I have concluded that the only way to fire anyone around here is to catch them over in Lafayette Park with a sheep.”

There were several others who heard that one. I think there were two or three of us there at the time. Mose must have been involved. He created, you recall — Murrow did — the pastureland. Mose must have had a lot to do with it. The pastureland was where Murrow could quietly assign somebody who wasn't doing the job and where in future, couldn't do any harm. That was known as the pastureland. You would remember that better than I, perhaps.

Oh, there were a lot of other things. Murrow used to really worry about his job. One illustration occurred when the first astronaut went up from the Soviet Union and the U.S. had decided we were going to plunge every cent we had in the government into getting a man up in the air, as it were. I recall Murrow discussing the issue with the USIA Assistant Directors - maybe you remember this — at one of the luncheons we used to have every week. He looked around and said, “This troubles me a great deal. I want to know quickly - I am going around the table here to ask you all - if the amount of money that we are now spending to get an astronaut into space were instead spent on solving X social problem (I don't even recall what it was that he named) in the United States, which do you think would be the most effective from our standpoint?”

Almost to a man, people around there who were concerned with overseas operations said we should spend the money on getting the astronaut up. I don't mean to suggest by this that the Assistant Directors didn't have concern for societal development.

Q: The impact of the Soviet launch on foreign audiences was immediate.

LINCOLN: That's right. Would the U.S. decision have an impact in foreign countries? Would this help? I recall other things that Murrow supported. One project which he and I developed together was to select several from amongst our younger officers - junior officers who were working in USIS programs in different countries, individual officers who were bilingual in the language of their country - and give them an academic year off from the agency to go to a university in that country and then come back to the agency. During the year they went to the university, although they were to report in every couple of weeks to let the country USIS post know whether they were alive or not, they were not to try to develop programs or anything else. If they were to develop programs later, when they came back to USIS proper, that was another matter.

We selected one young officer in India, one in Pakistan and one in Turkey. Then Murrow tried to sell the idea to the other Assistant Directors of areas. This was, as I recall it, 1963,

just before he became terribly ill, and he wasn't successful. He wasn't at all happy with the reaction of other areas because he felt that the operation would work.

Q: How did it turn out for the four selected?

LINCOLN: Three it was, in the countries I have named, India, Pakistan and Turkey.

Q: I mean, did they — do you know what their subsequent careers were?

LINCOLN: Sure. The one from Turkey later became Associate Director of the agency. The one from India later was in charge of USIA coordination of drug operations with the White House and once went over to the White House for a year on loan. The other young man — and this is where we failed — finally resigned from the agency, but I figure if we did two out of three it was worth it.

Side Comments on Lateral Entry and Junior Officer Trainee Programs

Q: Not bad.

LINCOLN: It wasn't bad at all, but that has been forgotten today. Would I like to see the program re-introduced? Well, there are several things I would like to see re-introduced. One would be the lateral entry program, because I feel that through lateral entry we were able to get people like Weathersby, who became an ambassador, and many other specialists. We saved the government and the agency in particular a tremendous amount of trouble.

The people who came in by lateral entry had already been selected by the private enterprise they were involved in. They had managed, we presume, to make a success there. Some of them were university types - academics, that is. Others had worked at printing, others in broadcasting, you name it. One benefit was to get people who had

already been selected pretty well. A second was to get well trained people. A third was to bring new blood into the foreign service, and I don't think that did harm.

Q: Of course, a lot of that happened in the early days of the agency, when we were just really cutting our teeth. One of the old characters — and I mean a real character - who came in under that program was a guy by the name of Chilly Harner, who died earlier this month.

LINCOLN: I read about that. I have heard about him but I never knew him.

Q: There are a lot of stories about him, but I don't want to take up your time now.

LINCOLN: Well, but he was good.

Q: Yes, he was.

LINCOLN: He was interesting.

Q: Also a great drinker, but -

LINCOLN: A lot of these people were. But, again, I think that lateral entry was very successful, a good thing, and much better than today's system whereby everybody who comes in to the agency comes in as a junior officer and goes up through the ranks.

I know the last JOT wine and cheese affair from the USIA Alumni Association -

Q: I goofed and got the wrong date down -

LINCOLN: We missed you. There are a few of us, like you and me and Peter Brescia, Lew Olum, who have been to nearly every one of those.

Q: This was only the second one I've missed.

LINCOLN: Well, we have received a number of compliments on them.

Q: I got a compliment today.

LINCOLN: Did you?

Q: I forget who gave it to me. I think it was Jim McGinley, Deputy Associate Director of USIA for Management, who mentioned it.

LINCOLN: He went to our last one, by the way. Well, we in every wine-and-cheese reception are a number of top USIA people whom most of the junior officers have never met. For example, the Acting Director of USIA, who is an old friend of yours, was at the last.

Q: Marvin Stone?

LINCOLN: Marvin Stone. Marvin, of course, became a principal speaker very informally. Mike Pister, Counselor of USIA, was there. Since Mike had addressed them before, he said he wouldn't say anything at this time. McGinley and two or three other people of consequence in the agency, plus quite a few others, joined in. One factor that disturbed me about this was that the junior officer training program is now run by the Personnel Division of USIA, and has become completely bureaucratic.

Among these latest junior officers was somebody who taught English in Japan, so where does personnel make sure to send her? The middle of Africa. Here is somebody who has a special background already. Why not make use of it? Personnel's answer to this — one of their men came over afterward and talked to me — is that we must send junior officers to a place they are not familiar with. The theory is that they are going to serve in a lot of different countries, as they have to in a career, and after ten or fifteen years, they must be used to everything. Then we'll see how good they are. I think that's a lot of baloney.

Q: After they have forgotten all about the country that they knew most about to begin with.

LINCOLN: Well, there were at least five who had done something special in terms of language or activities in some section of the world or some foreign country. None goes back to where he or she has been before. Instead they are assigned as far away from there as possible. I don't think this is the way to handle it at all. Why not make use of a talent when it comes along?

Q: Anyway, let's get back to your position in the Near East. What do you think were the highlights of your period as Assistant Director for the Near East?

LINCOLN: I think I have already mentioned them.

Q: You have mentioned them already.

LINCOLN: Yes, getting to know Murrow was first.

Q: That was a highlight for you?

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: What did you do after that?

LINCOLN: Oh, oh, wait a minute. There was something else that I did during the end of my tenure there. I pursued very strongly two different things. One was the question of whether Greece and Turkey should be in USIA's Near East and South Asia geographic area, which was what I was involved in, or should be in Western Europe. I said they ought to be over in Europe. Neither of them belonged with the other countries we had in the Near East and South Asia.

Q: They are there in Europe now, I think.

LINCOLN: They are now, correct, although it took six or eight years. But it finally did happen, so we felt we had laid the groundwork for it then. A second thing was to try to emphasize the need for improvements and increase in the Foreign Service career staff rather than in the domestic staff. We didn't succeed in that. I continued in the Near East and South Asia through Murrow's illness - as he said, “I was separated from my lung”, as I'm sure you remember very well. Then in early - let me get my years right again - Murrow died when?

Q: 1965. He lasted actually through almost May of 1965.

LINCOLN: Ah. Carl Rowan took over as USIA Director when?

Q: He took over about, I think about late February or early March of 1964.

Lincoln Moves From Assistant Director, USIA For Near East to Same Position for Europe

LINCOLN: All right. That would fit, from everything that I recall, because after he had been in the job for a matter of one or two months he called me in on a Monday. I had known Carl a long while when he was at State. He called me in and he said, “Bob, would you take over Western Europe?” I said, “Why?” He said, “Because you are a good hatchet man.” He said, “We have got to change the old European club and only if we bring somebody in who is tough-minded and who has no connections whatsoever with the history of that element will we be able to make changes.”

Restructuring and Re-Staffing the Agency's European Programs

“First, I want to see a lot of the senior personnel quietly moved out and assigned elsewhere and, second, I want to see the programs changed. I have tried bringing in somebody from Europe and asking that it be done and nothing has ever happened. Do you want to try it?” I said, “Sure.” I was young and cocky. So I was USIA Assistant Director for Western Europe for a year and a half or thereabouts. The task was to bring about

change. An awful lot of people have resented this, naturally. I think I would have. For example, in the Paris program there were a number of officers who had spent their entire careers in Europe — ten, twelve, fifteen years — and never served anywhere else. There were several who had served entirely in France. I didn't think that should be allowed to exist.

At any rate, after an initial trip to the European area, I took back ideas, thoughts and what have you to Carl Rowan and discussed them. He, I remember, pulled in Lionel Mosley. “Mose” was then director of personnel and he and Carl agreed on a number of these recommendations. During the next few weeks, Mose pretty much laid out where different individuals would go. A lot of them, I fear, went to underdeveloped countries. Underdeveloped countries are a little tough on anybody who has spent all of his career in Paris, let us say. There was the wife of one man whom I have run into quite often since who still resents it, because they went down to the middle of Africa and -

Q: That was John Mowinckel?

LINCOLN: John resents anything I ever did, but I won't go into that. No, it wasn't Mowinckel, but it was an officer who worked for Mowinckel. John we shifted, too, you recall.

Q: Yes, I know.

LINCOLN: We had decided to. He didn't know of the decision when Carl went out on that famous visit and Mowinckel failed to meet Carl's wife at the right Paris airport. He went to the wrong airport. That really clinched things. Yes, it was a cinch then that the decision had been made and that was that. The transfer must have been quietly arranged within a week or two after Carl got back to Washington. John was an immensely competent guy but, darn it, he had never been into the hinterlands. He just plain hadn't. So USIA moved a whole lot of the personnel. It also changed programs. Again, citing the one in Paris as an example, I found three nationals occupied with the job of producing annually a

special directory of foreign correspondents operating in Paris. This included Dutch, British, German, Scandinavian and what have you.

I didn't think that this was a task for USIS. It had been a task back in the days of the Marshall Plan. That is when the publication had been started: it had grown like Topsy and still existed and nobody had ever questioned it in all of this time.

Q: I don't know that we actually questioned it but I think we commented on it at the time we made the inspection in '69 — no, that was afterward, that was later. That is why.

LINCOLN: Another thing I ran into in Europe, and by the way our judgment on this was confirmed many years later when I was there after retirement, was the London USIS library. In '64, it was in the American Embassy on Berkeley Square. That meant that Marines were guarding it; it was very hard to reach and it was in a wealthy section of town. If you were a student you never went there, and students were extremely important to us as far as the English operation was concerned. They were not only British students but they were students from all of the British colonies, from less developed areas - from Africa, South Asia, the Far East - people who still had a connection with Britain.

So I asked for help from ICS back here in Washington - I think Hal Schneidman was the director of all libraries.

Q: Who?

LINCOLN: Hal Schneidman, who was in charge of libraries in ICS.

Q: He was the ICS man.

LINCOLN: Yes. Well, it was Schneidman with whom I worked this out. Our plan was to take a large segment - ninety percent - of the library at USIS London in the American embassy andmove it to the University of London, where we made a contract with the university under which we would continue to supply new books. The university would

supply operational personnel would guarantee to us that thus and so would be done. Obviously that sort of thing is quite a shift -

Q: You say this was London?

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: I thought we were talking about Paris for now.

LINCOLN: We were earlier. No, this was over in London, another enterprise entirely. That was in 1964. Much later, after retirement, I lived in London and in 1975, got to know, through the Harkness Foundation mainly, because I was doing a special study of Harkness fellowships, a number of the professors at the University of London who had gone on Harkness fellowships to the U.S. twenty or thirty years before.

One of them remembered me very well, although I didn't remember him. He recalled very clearly when we moved the USIS library over. He said that it was immensely useful because he could recommend to the students in his department that they get such-and-such a book over at the library, which the university and USIS were in charge of. The library is still there, I might add.

The Successful Special Cultural Attach# Experiment

There were any number of people in our USIS London program who flatly disagreed with the idea of putting anything directly under the British and not totally under our control. Another program in London that worked extremely well, and we applied it in several other cities, was one which concerned the cultural affairs section. We would borrow from a university in the U.S. aprofessor who was going to be on sabbatical and assign him to an individual country as a special cultural attach#. If the assignment went well, we would usually arrange for him to spend an extra year there. The professor we were able to get for London at the time was a man I got to know extremely well, Cleanth Brooks, who was then

in New Haven at Yale. One assignment on which I did all of the search was that of Larry Wylie, a professor of sociology at Harvard, who went to Paris as special cultural attach#.

Each was extremely well known in the country to which he was assigned by virtue of his publications and his contacts. For example, Wylie had once published a tremendously famous sociological work called Village in the Vandose long before he became a full professor. He held the Douglas Dillon chair up at Harvard.

Because of the fact of the book, everybody in the French academic world soon knew who Wylie was, if they hadn't known before. In each case, we had sent, in other words, a man of note to the country and we had shown our respect for the individual country by doing so, and they respected that. Secondly, we had assigned a man who knew his way around and who in no time at all had contacts all over the lot. I remember, for example, going to receptions several times — this is back to London again — during the 1960s that Cleanth Brooks had arranged. There you would meet leading figures from throughout the British literary world.

Cleanth became quite a close personal friend because he was intrigued by the idea that any bureaucrat like myself would attempt to write poetry. He was, you know, a rather famous poetry critic. One long poem which I worked on under his direction was finally published in Sewannee Review; that was one of the high points of my whole life. Writing poetry was totally different from what you normally do in USIS in the foreign service. While the American professor was in the foreign country, we had to be sure that we assigned under him a competent cultural affairs officer who knew the ins and outs of CAO's operations, which then involved two government elements, State and USIA. An officer named Francis Mason was first with Cleanth in London and was very good. Because his reputation got to be so high and he was so well known, Don Wilson, who was then the Deputy USIA Director, wanted Francis to come to Washington to be in charge of USIA Exhibits. The transfer was over my dead body. But I arranged for another officer to replace Francis in London.

I am told by Mike Pvister who was then the Student Affairs Officer in London, that the new man and Cleanth didn't really mix. He made a go of being the special cultural attach#, but he didn't enjoy his last year there anywhere near as much as he had the first year. He turned out, incidentally, to be an absolutely superb bureaucrat in the sense of turning out country plans and other “bureaucratic” papers for USIA. He was said to be the man who wrote the USIS country plan for England — and I am not surprised, because, clearly, Cleanth could write. After all, he had published a number of books, magazine articles, God only knows what. He also could think.

Wylie did very well in Paris. Later, Robin Winks whom you know -

Q: I don't know him, but I know of him.

LINCOLN: Yes. Many years after I was involved in Europe, Robin was our special cultural attach# in London. I would say this was 1969 through the early 1970s. In one of his recent books, Winks speaks highly of his assignment as special cultural attach# under a program which “regrettably has since been abandoned.”

Q: I didn't know that.

LINCOLN: I didn't, either, but it has been, apparently, because there is none over there now. I know that in Paris, Wylie may have been the last non-career officer. He may have been the only one. In London, the program existed before and after. In Rome it existed for a while. It onceexisted out in India for a period.

Q: It also existed in Japan.

LINCOLN: In Japan, but I don't think it exists today. We were speaking earlier of Robin Winks. In the book, Cloak and Gown (1986), mainly on the CIA, he makes the very important point without quite stating it, that there always should be close cooperative

activity, if it is at all possible, between government agencies and elements of the academic world. You see very little of that today. Well, I have described the high points there.

Q: Anything else to discuss on the European side?

LINCOLN: Yes. The reduction of individual programs - as I said, speaking of that one example in Paris, a lot of our problem was simply looking around for the obvious. In Germany there were binational centers where the budget could be cut in half without any suffering whatsoever, and in some instances it was probably only sensible to eliminate the center.

Q: A good deal of that had been going on earlier, too. They had been turning more of those centers over, in whole or in part, to German financing and German direction.

LINCOLN: Correct.

Q: The Germans would often come up and insist that we put an American back in them for a while, and we did renege in a couple of cases.

LINCOLN: Our objective was to accelerate the change.

PAO in Turkey: 1965

Q: Well, from there you went where? You went to Turkey from there?

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: That was when, about 1965?

LINCOLN: It was the end of 1965. I arrived in Turkey on the first day of 1966, I think, as PAO, because - why? Well, because a lot of the changes that we were trying to

make in Western Europe didn't suit the newer administration in USIA, and that was understandable.

Turkey was a country I knew pretty well. We had as ambassador Pete Hart, whom I had known for a years and liked immensely. I broke all bureaucratic records. I was in Turkey for five and a half years.

Q: You were there five and a half years?

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: I had forgotten you were there that long.

LINCOLN: Well, at that time — I don't know what happens today — at that time I don't think anybody had ever spent five and a half years in one country. It happened because Frank Shakespeare became the director of USIA after Nixon's election in 1968. I was then due to make a shift, but Frank and I talked about a whole lot of things and, strangely enough, got along extremely well. I say strangely enough because everyone in USIA thinks of him, and rightfully so, as being far to the right, and I was out of the New Frontier.

Q: You had been in Turkey when Frank came in — you had been in Turkey about two and a half years, hadn't you?

LINCOLN: A little longer. As I said, I was due to shift and didn't. Frank came out and inspected — this is a very interesting thing to me, and I don't think it has ever been publicized. Frank came to Turkey and spent close to two days personally looking over our whole Turkish operation. Leon Picon was there as Cultural Affairs Officer, and Leon was a fascinating figure. Art Hoffman was then the deputy.

Q: Was Leon Picon still there as CAO?

LINCOLN: He was still there after I left. Nobody was as good as Leon turned out to be. I really think he was superb. We were running a left-of-center program, more cultural than informational in the old-fashioned sense. The program was meant to appeal to upper intellectual levels in the foreign ministry, the academic world, the media and so on. It featured such things as Turkish production by the Turkish National Theater of translations of American musicals. Leon arranged most of those. I remember My Fair Lady, for example, and there were a number of others. He would first have Turkish people translate. In the case of My Fair Lady, for instance, Sevki Sanle from near Izmir did a superb job, and she explained why. (She spoke, I should add, English just as well as she did Turkish, an amazing woman.)

Sevki pointed out that “over in Izmir, we have an accent in which we drop the H's, just as in My Fair Lady.” I had never known that. Now, let me see, I am trying to remember the year, because you were in Izmir as Consul General. Did you ever run into her?

Q: What is her name again?

LINCOLN: Sevki Sanle, S-E-V-K-I S-A-N-L-E.

Q: No.

LINCOLN: I guess she operated entirely in Ankara.

Q: Well, she may have been closely associated with the Turkish-American Association, which is the official name of the binational center there. In my time, its Director was an American USIA officer, and the only USIS representative in Izmir.

LINCOLN: It's possible.

Q: I had a project to do with that, but my job there was not a USIA job.

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: I don't think I -

LINCOLN: You just did everything?

Q: Pardon?

LINCOLN: You did everything.

Q: No. She — I mean, I don't think I knew her. Carl Broukman at that time was the Center Director.

LINCOLN: Who was it again?

Q: Carl Broukman.

LINCOLN: Oh, I remember Carl. Benno Selke later was the PAO over there. Do you remember Benno? He was out of the USIA German program.

Q: Yes. He was the PAO — he went to the center after that?

LINCOLN: No, he was PAO in Izmir after Carl was director of the center. I don't think Carl was still the director of the center when Benno went out to Izmir, or was he?

Q: I don't know. As I said, in my time there, the only American USIS Officer in Izmir was the Binational Center Director. Carl was still there when I left.

LINCOLN: Isn't it awful how you forget a lot of these things.

Q: I left in September of 1966 and Carl was still the director of the center at that time. I was not aware that USIS ever had a PAO there, as such.

LINCOLN: Benno went to Izmir sometime in 1967, that is my guess. Again, he was PAO and Carl had gone by then.

Q: Yes, Carl would have gone by then.

LINCOLN: Well, at any rate, when Frank Shakespeare visited Turkey as USIS Director, Leon and I were running a definite left-of-center program. Our basic theory was that somehow or other within a few years the leftist party, the Republican People's Party — it was leftist on the political scene in Turkey — would come into power.

There had been a mass appeal magazine at USIS Ankara which we quietly eliminated and replaced with a magazine which Leon edited. I don't believe that the only USIS publication in any USIS country post before had been one that came out of the cultural section. Rather, basic publications normally came out your information section.

Q: They also were published often, most of the time, back down at the Regional Service Center in Beirut.

LINCOLN: The old Regional Service Center in Beirut, that's right. However, this time, we published locally. Both Leon and I had a number of friends in the Turkish academic world and we were trying to find a translation in Turkish for the word “horizon” which would be the title. The best translation was “Ufuk.”

I don't think I ever accomplished anything else in Turkey as well known back in Washington as to have created a magazine with a title like that. It was broadly noticed. The magazine has been abandoned, don't worry, for many years. Our goal then was to publish a magazine which would carry only translations of U.S. works from intellectual publications. By intellectual I mean everything from Kenyon Review to Harper's to The New York Times Magazine.

The agency was very cooperative. USIA would make arrangements to get the approval for us to use an article. We published about six articles per issue. The magazine came out every month.

Q: How often did you issue it?

LINCOLN: Monthly. What year did we start it? Perhaps 1967.

Q: Who did your translating?

LINCOLN: Mostly people on our own staff, on Leon's staff specifically. There was one girl, for example, a delightful person, who was absolutely bilingual. I remember Frank Shakespeare asking her (Leon has reminded me of this), “And where did you learn your Turkish?” Good gravy, he thought she was part of our American staff.

Q: [Laughter.]

LINCOLN: Leon was very proud of that, understandably so. At any rate, the magazine had a very small circulation. It never went above 1,500. Where was the circulation? Selected people from the academic world; all universities — Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul, people from the foreign ministry, because the foreign ministry had tremendous power in the country, as you may recall; people from the government as a whole — but, again, individually selected; certain people from the media, selected writers, and so on.

For example, one of the men who liked the magazine very much and became practically an advisor was the editor of the daily newspaper, Milliyet. Milliyet was powerful then. Today it is less powerful, I understand. The editor came from Izmir originally, by the way, although I met him in Istanbul.

Q: Do you know what his name was?

LINCOLN: Abdi Ipekci. He was assassinated later, in 1980. I used to exchange Christmas cards with him. His foreign editor was Sammy Cohen, spelled in Turkish Sami Kohen.

Q: Just as we had an Alex Johnson, spelled in Turkish, Haluk Cansin, who was an editor. I think he was the deputy assistant editor of Yeni Asir, the main newspaper in Izmir.

LINCOLN: #ansin - I believe. Perfect. The Turks are very sensible at phonetic spelling, you know. My name in Turkish was L-dotted i-N-K-N, perfect - much easier to understand than Lincoln. It made a lot more sense, with the dotted “I” which, well -

Q: It is the short “I” as opposed to the long “I”?

LINCOLN: Yes. For that matter, some people did spell the name L-i-N-K-I-N. Well, Milliyet was an extremely influential newspaper among the members of the socialist Republican People's Party, and by socialism I suspect that I don't mean socialism as it is looked on by most Americans.

Q: No, it is only leftist in the sense of favoring state enterprise in comparison with the opposition Justice party.

LINCOLN: That's right.

Q: That was his principal stock in trade.

LINCOLN: Correct. At any rate, the moderate leader of the RPP at the time was Nihat Erim, and he Ipekci was an intellectual leader. It took us about two years to get to know Ipekci very well. He simply didn't like Americans but he gradually became a rather good friend. Sami Kohen, the foreign editor, was the opposite. Sami liked Americans; anyway, he didn't give a darn. He was the stringer for Newsweek, among other things. He is still alive, I think. Ipekci was assassinated by the same man who later tried to kill the Pope. Erim was assassinated by a terrorist in 1980, as I remember it.

Erim, at any rate, was the moderate leader of the RPP, or socialist party. He had once been the Turkish representative on human rights to the United Nations. He was a professor at the University of Istanbul at one time, a thoughtful man. He used to come up to the house because he liked Catherine, my wife, very much. She could speak Turkish with him. He didn't speak much English. His French was good. I remember one time at dinner at the house he was giving us the history of the cradle that we had recently bought near Izmir, an old Turkish-Aegean cradle. It was an antique, but he knew all about why and how such cradles were used. He spent half an hour telling Catherine about it. Son Henry was then probably two years old, so I don't think he remembered any of it afterward. Finally, the USIS left-of-center program worked. We were doing the right thing. There wasn't any question, so if you ask whether USIS had an impact, yes, we had a huge impact at that time in Turkey.

When the military in 1971 overthrew Demirel's Justice, conservative government - it was the military who performed a quiet coup, as we called it -

Q: Yes.

LINCOLN: They installed Erim as the prime minister.

Another man with whom we had had dinner at Erim's house, a few weeks before he was named the deputy prime minister and approximately half of the cabinet were people we knew one way or another. I remember several of them telephoned Catherine to let her know: “Guess what, I've just been installed” and that sort of thing.

Q: You know, as a matter of fact -

LINCOLN: Frank Shakespeare, conservative though he was, approved of what USIS Turkey had done.

Q: When the military had their earlier coup, when they unseated Menderes back in 1960, when they executed him, they were pretty much in the left themselves, strangely enough. The military, in comparison with the Menderes group, a leftist-oriented government. They separated the old Republican People's Party, which was later voted out.

LINCOLN: They overthrew a rightist group.

Q: Well, then Menderes' party was rightist. It was then known as the old Democratic party and was overthrown by the military/RPP combine.

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: The military overthrew the Democratic Party Government and they were more or less socialist oriented but not strictly so. They were in for more than four years, and they finally allowed an election - for five years - in 1965 and the Justice party of Demirel, which was the successor party of the old Democrat party. They roundly defeated the RPP and came to power. That is when Demirel became prime minister.

LINCOLN: Yes. Well, Demirel was prime minister until early 1971, the period I am describing. The Justice party and he were it. As a result, the embassy and CIA had the closest imaginable contacts with Demirel and the Justice party. They apparently didn't know the RPP very well.

Q: I know. That was a reversal of the 1960-65 period when the Embassy was cozy with the RPP, and didn't know the Justice Party well.

LINCOLN: We did — USIS did, that is. So when the -

Q: The embassy didn't know the Justice Party when the RPP was in, either. That is the reason that my first year in Izmir was so interesting, because I knew the Justice Party.

LINCOLN: Well, there you are. That's right. Demirel came from Izmir, didn't he?

Q: I can't remember whether he personally came from Izmir or not, but the main strength of the Justice Party was in Izmir. He had an American education, as I recall.

LINCOLN: He had once worked for — who was it he worked for? The great engineers and builders.

Q: Yes, he was an engineer, I can't think now - it could have been the Bechtel Company.

LINCOLN: The American outfit. I keep thinking of Kaiser, but that isn't correct.

Q: Well, Demirel got an American degree in engineering as I recall.

LINCOLN: You are right. At any rate, the RPP in early 1971 was, first, pretty much unknown to the official United States except for USIS and, second, socialist very definitely, but moderate socialists. The majority weren't the far left socialists. I felt that this was beneficial to the United States in this case. They were about to come in and I would rather see the moderate socialists come in than the violently anti-American socialists of the far left. Partly as a result of that, Henry Loomis, then USIA Deputy Director, and Shakespeare together decided that I would go out to Vietnam. Otherwise I wouldn't have - there wouldn't have been any reason at all, because I was still considered in the dog house on Vietnam.

In 1967 I was one of those PAOs, you remember, who was flown to Vietnam for a two or three week orientation trip. When I came back after that trip I filed written and oral reports disagreeing with a whole lot that went on in Vietnam. I could only speak for our public affairs operation, of course. I didn't think that the U.S. should ever be the surrogate ministry of information for a foreign government, which is what we -

Lincoln Transferred to Vietnam (1971) With Instructions to Dismantle JUSPAO

Q: You went out to Vietnam in 1969?

LINCOLN: I went out briefly on orientation in 1967 -

Q: I mean to be the head of JUSPAO.

LINCOLN: 1971.

Q: 1971.

LINCOLN: Yes, the middle of 1971. I had stayed in Turkey through from 1966 to the middle of 1971, five and a half years. The main reason I was ever concerned with Vietnam was that I was one of the PAOs from different countries who went out on the special USIA-sponsored orientation trip. We went around the country and I recall particularly a couple of things. An officer of USIS by the Cambodian border said that if Disney had wanted to start a war, this would have been it.

Then there was another American officer — these are quotes, and fairly common ones apparently — who said that what we should do now is stop everything, build a wall around the country and charge admission. In one year we'll get all our money back. That was the way they felt.

When I went there on orientation in 1967, as I said, I filed a number of reports and made oral comments to the effect that I am not sure what we are doing is at all right. Again, you didn't question what the military was doing, or what the U.S. as a whole was doing, because even though if you did question it that wasn't really our USIS business. We could speak specifically about the informational/cultural operation. I didn't think that we should be in the position of operating for a foreign government anywhere, but that is what had happened in Vietnam.

Shakespeare was one of the few men who listened to all of this. Here you have a man who was looked on as being very anticommunist, very right of center, and who therefore should have approved of everything in Vietnam. He had strong reservations about it. He was among those influential with Nixon as president in saying that we should find a way to get out. It would take time, you didn't do it overnight, you didn't follow recommendations of the New Yorker or the demonstrators or what have you, but nevertheless whoever became president should find a way.

Thus, in the middle of 1971 I went there to Vietnam as PAO.

The Dismemberment of JUSPAO

Q: Had the old Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office organization been already abandoned, or was it still in existence?

LINCOLN: It was still in existence. I went out with flat-out instructions from Frank Shakespeare, first, to find a way of getting rid of the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office; second, to get all of the military out from under USIS control (we had a whale of a lot of military positions) and to change JUSPAO back to a normal USIS and to cut that back in terms of personnel and budget. Those were strict instructions. Lionel Mosley was still USIA director of personnel and was marvelously cooperative. A couple of things happened when I first went out to Vietnam on assignment as PAO in 1971.

For one thing, the first full day I was there, USIS people literally — that is, Americans — lined up at the door wanting to come back to the U.S., saying their jobs were worthless and they shouldn't be there. One of them was Wilson Dizard, head of research and operations. Wilson thought we could immediately eliminate two of the American positions in his operation here in Saigon and Frank Scotton, could take over.

On the military side I found 102 American military positions in the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Officer.

Q: Wanting to leave, I presume?

LINCOLN: The way to get eliminate them was fairly simple. Whenever one was vacated you just didn't get around to refilling it, and pretty soon the Army took the position back.

Q: Military officers rotated about every thirteen months, I recall.

LINCOLN:It was fourteen, as I recall it. Within a year, there was hardly a military position left in JUSPAO. Where we had fifty-some civilian positions, we cut the figure back to thirty-some. Within a year and a half we had changed JUSPAO over to a regular USIS operation and thus, had Vietnamized the old JUSPAO. The number of local positions we had was never known, really. When I was assigned to Vietnam, there were five hundred and some on the payroll. A lot of those were tombstones, people who didn't exist but the paycheck was being collected, et cetera, et cetera.

We cut that back in no time at all — oh, I don't know, let's say to a hundred or something like that. Now, in March of 1972, there was the immense invasion from the north called the Easter Invasion. This was one of the few which the North Vietnamese lost their shirts on, much to everybody's surprise.

One of the things that we did was a tremendous amount of VOA broadcasting. We were able to broadcast on medium wave eighteen hours a day. Ken Giddens was then the director of VOA and Frank Shakespeare, of course, was the director of USIA, and they coordinated but fast. Within just a matter of weeks we were broadcasting the eighteen hours daily to the north. We had a number of hours per day, I couldn't tell you how many, coming off the IOU kW USIA transmitter in the Philippines, which was then the largest

in the world. It broadcast over water to Hanoi. The result is that the signal boomed into Hanoi.

One really important listener in Hanoi was the British consul general. He had to come down and report to Saigon fairly often.

Q: He was operating — he was in Hanoi?

LINCOLN: Hanoi, yes, the British consul general in Hanoi. He came down to Saigon once every month or two, to report in because, after all, his ambassador was in Saigon. We could then find out how the VOA signal was coming in. Last summer, I wrote an article for the USIA Alumni Association News about the Easter Invasion, and I'd like to quote from it. “Whether you supported or opposed the creation and doings of JUSPAO, it is hard to question the effectiveness of a unified information-cultural operation when it came to the 1972 Easter invasion from the North...

“The 1972 Easter Invasion...was supposed to be a blitzkrieg from north and west to Saigon. In a matter of hours after it started, all elements of USIS were in action. They would not have been if run by a variety of separate official and unofficial departments and institutes in Washington.

“Officers involved came from varied backgrounds but were responsive to one Agency, USIA. Policy Officer Frank Scotton, for example, once a public affairs trainee, found his talents in demand in radio.

“CAO Bill DeMyer, whose final responsibilities concerned the largest Binational Center in existence, saw to it that library distribution points and English language classes had the latest and most accurate information about the fighting.

“Research Officer Bill Gausmann, who had been a USIA labor information specialist, kept close track of the misinformation being supplied in and by Hanoi — and Hanoi's reaction

to information from USIS. The information section worked around the clock supplying material locally and to IPS in Washington. All obviously were coordinated closely with the government of the Republic of Vietnam.

“In an astonishingly short time, Voice of America's Vietnamese language service was broadcasting 18 hours a day on medium wave to North Vietnamese civilians and soldiers...

“Did the broadcasts work? In a captured diary, one North Vietnamese officer recorded his reliance on VOA, not Radio Hanoi. The latter claimed his troops were in Hue in the northern part of South Vietnam. VOA gave what the officer knew were facts: the troops never reached Hue - he was with them...

“Thirteen years later, a communist-oriented history, in emphasizing South Vietnam's military problems, said the Easter invasion nonetheless showed that the North Vietnamese army had not yet learned enough. On the spot and at the time, USIA in 1972 was equipped to give a far better account.”

I would guess that about then, the early 1970s, was a glory period of USIA. You were PAO over in Thailand, I know. Who was PAO in Japan at that time?

Q: Wasn't Ned Roberts PAO in Japan then?

LINCOLN: No, Al.

Q: Al Carter.

LINCOLN: Yes. I liked Ned much, much better, I might add.

Q: Al was a big joke among the Japanese.

LINCOLN: He was the one who installed the program under which, let me see, they kept records on everybody and - it was like the old and discarded Program Planning Budgeting System, which recognized only figures at the expense of human factors.

Q: Also, you had a clean desk. Every time the branch post knew AI was coming they would clean off the desks and put it all in locked files.

LINCOLN: Marvelous.

Q: They would have just a couple of papers on the desk all the time that they were working on. As soon as he left, they took all of the stuff out of the files.

LINCOLN: I hadn't heard that part of it. That is a lovely story.

Q: Well, what else do you have to say about Vietnam, now that we have had this diversion?

LINCOLN: I think Vietnam is a good illustration of the fact that the United States should never stay so deeply involved in a war when we don't have domestic support.

Military Dominated all Operations in Vietnam, Even the Embassy Seemed to be Under its Control

It is interesting to me that it was a Republican administration which finally decided to make the changes. The second thing that it illustrated was that we shouldn't rely on our military to try to convince a people of the value of democratic governments or democratic ways of doing things. It is not part of the military background, just as I don't know a darned thing about canons, I don't expect them to know something about a parliament, but that is what was happening out there.

The military were, in fact, was running almost everything in Vietnam and that was one of the reasons for getting rid of the joint U.S. Public Affairs Office. Too many people felt that

by having a joint U.S. Public Affairs Office we therefore were bringing the military under our control, at least that aspect. We weren't — just the opposite.

Q: Very often the military was the one that was in control of the regional area.

LINCOLN: I couldn't agree more. The military people we would have in individual areas would often be the senior people and the chief people and the U.S. civilian just another guy. We couldn't do anything. There are all kinds of illustrations of this. I remember one of our USIS Officers, for example, whose name I will not mention, who was talking about the fact that where he was - and he was a province chief - the military really ran the province. He said, we tried to run the informational side but they were the ones who made the final decisions on it or, if they wanted to cancel something, killed it. The fellow Funkhouser whom I mentioned in Syria earlier, came out to run III corps with the embassy. Although he was the civilian in charge of III corps, he wasn't really running things, not at all. (III corps was the one closest to Saigon.) Again, he wouldn't say an awful lot about such matters. He didn't get along well enough with civilians - civilian Americans, that is, over at the embassy - to ever criticize in that fashion.

Ellsworth Bunker often seemed to lean more on the U.S. military than on the U.S. civilian. Incidentally, he had two deputy ambassadors while I was there. Charlie Whitehouse was the last and before him it was -

Q: Berger, Sam Berger.

LINCOLN: Sam Berger, and Sam was brilliant.

Q: He was the political counselor in Tokyo when I was there years before.

LINCOLN: Then you knew him. Well, I worked hand in hand with him during most of the time that I was in Vietnam. I was more and more fascinated. I saw him back here -

Q: Sam Berger got sacked out -

LINCOLN: At any rate Sam had cancer back here. The point that I was about to make was that Ellsworth Bunker, as ambassador there - a fascinating old aristocrat, of course, and an awfully good mind — seemed to lean more heavily on Abe Abrams who was the chief U.S. military general, than on his civilian staff.

Q: They established a very close relationship and Julie (Abram's wife) thought the world of Ellsworth, and of course with Carol Louise, Bunker's wife, being up in Nepal and bouncing back and forth they saw each other an awful lot.

LINCOLN: Well, the civilian-military differences I found quite interesting, because you would have figured from the outside, if you were an American, that there ought to be American civilian control of U.S. operations. Even in the embassy sometimes there wasn't.

We used to have weekly luncheons over at Bunker's house, everybody who was on the U.S. mission council. There were, let's see, twelve of us. At the end of the luncheon, time after time, Abe and Bunker would privately go off somewhere and spend fifteen or twenty minutes — or longer — discussing this, that or the other thing. You could see it and feel it all the while.

I found it very regrettable. One of the times in which civilian control was maintained was in something I was involved in. This was after the invasion in 1972 from the north, when we formed a special task force, which was made up of the military who were there, the Seventh Air Force, one of the people from CIA, Embassy and AID representatives, myself and one or two of our people. The task force was concerned with all informational activities toward North Vietnam. We met daily and really decided things. The task force was placed under USIS direction by Ambassador Bunker, which may have been unusual because I assumed that the Saigon station chief for CIA plus its people in the U.S. had worked their heads off to get it placed under CIA direction.

Back here in Washington the activities were under CIA direction, which was confusing. Whenever I discussed with Washington what we were doing locally, it was with a CIA man who was in charge of the task force here. This was an anomaly, but in Saigon, we kept it entirely under USIS control. How did it happen? Through people like Scotton who were just much faster and had better information.

Random Comments About Occurrences and Policies in Vietnam

At that time one of the compromises we made — and I hated to have to do this as a professional informational cultural operator — was to allow the Seventh Air Force to increase the dropping of leaflets particularly over North Vietnam. Most of us from USIS used to privately and quietly say that the U.S. has dropped enough paper over North Vietnam just during this one invasion to take care of all of North Vietnam's toiletry needs for the next ten years. It was very costly for the United States and I don't think that it really had much effect, but in order to get other things we wanted, we had to go along, and we did. That was the compromise.

Q: The leaflets were practically all printed at the USIS Regional Service Center in Manila, too. The things were put together in Vietnam but they were sent to Manila for multiple printing.

LINCOLN: Yes.

Q: I have forgotten who it was in RSC Manila I was talking to. They said the stuff went out of there, thousands and thousands, every week.

LINCOLN: Another thing that the planes dropped - and this was very expensive but may have worked — were small radio sets. The Seventh Air Force paid for the production of a number of these small units, about the size of a cigarette pack, which were pretuned to medium wave. They were not pretuned to an individual frequency. You could get the whole medium wave band, but only medium wave. They were dropped in special

styrofoam containers with parachutes by B-52s over North Vietnam. How many were dropped? Thousands, I suppose; I forget. I did, however, keep one of them, one that we used for testing purposes, with me for the next several years because it worked so well, an amazing little machine.

Q: Who put them out?

LINCOLN: The Air Force bought them in Korea from private Korean companies. We considered the dropping part of our medium wave broadcasting operation. The Seventh Air Force was very happy.

Q: How long did you stay in Vietnam?

LINCOLN: A year and a half. I left there in April of 1972, April 1 or thereabouts.

Q: Ellsworth Bunker was still the ambassador when you left?

LINCOLN: He was the ambassador.

Q: You weren't there when Graham Martin replaced him?

LINCOLN: No, but we at USIS Saigon had arranged beforehand to bring John Hogan down from the north to be Martin's press attach#. John was up there in Danang in charge of our operation. You know, you never know when you'll run into somebody you have known for many, many years.

I knew John back in the mid 1950s when he was in Cairo, Egypt. I knew the girl he married there. John I found up in Danang. The system while Bunker was Ambassador was to bring Hogan down whenever Ward Kirchwehm, who was the press attach# under USIS direction for the embassy, went on local or home leave.

We brought him down twice and the embassy thought the world of him. He had the Irish blarney, every bit of it. Among other things, he had a capacity for drinking. Hogan did a very good job, and when I left the arrangements had been completed for him to replace Kirchwehm as the embassy press attach#. John had been in Saigon several months by the time Graham Martin came.

What else is there for me to recall about Vietnam? Well, a wonderful line from Ambassador Bunker. I had decided to retire toward the end of January in 1973, because I wanted to retire while Frank Shakespeare was still director of USIA. Frank, you recall, had made the announcement that he was going to leave USIA at such and such a time, I think it was February.

Q: February or March of 1973.

LINCOLN: Yes. So, at any rate, I called Frank, because we had phone service, fantastic telephones to Washington. I called Frank and said that the following day I was going to tell Ambassador Bunker of my retirement, but I wanted to be sure that he, Frank, knew about it beforehand. Frank could understand. So I went to see Bunker the following morning saying I said I didn't want to let the USIS staff know because morale would be affected. Bunker thought for a minute and then said, “Well, Bob, sorry, we'll miss your wife Catherine.”

Q: [Laughter.]

LINCOLN: She had worked on Episcopalian church affairs with him. End of conversation. Well, it wasn't ended that quickly. He did add in some detail that I'd be missed, too. Interesting things that occurred out there — now, let me see. Oh, yes. The whole scandal of Watergate was brought to Vietnam on such and such a day at about 11:30 a.m. or 12:00 noon through Stars and Stripes, the Pacific edition. They carried the first AP Wire Service story on it. Over at our house, having a drink before lunch, at were Glen Garment

from the White House and Frank Shakespeare. Both of them were visiting Vietnam at the time. They were old friends, as you know. As soon as Stars and Stripes appeared they took one look at it and, well, they weren't exactly ashen but they weren't happy.

They went off into a corner and talked for fifteen or twenty minutes and then came back. I will never know what they said, but I do know that within weeks Frank announced that he was leaving USIA very, very soon. He was a straight-laced Catholic, as you know.

Q: Oh, yes.

LINCOLN: A very moral man. I don't think that morally and ethically he really approved of Watergate, but I don't know. He has never said he didn't. There is no way of our knowing.

Q: I don't think he did.

LINCOLN: I believe this, but I have nothing to go on.

Q: I believe it. The reason I believe it is because I think he was cut out of the plans by that time.

LINCOLN: His only contact by then at the White House was Garment. He didn't have other contacts there.

Q: I believe he was completely out of the inner circles at the White House.

LINCOLN: You are correct, I think.

Q: It started when he got cut out of the National Security Council by Henry Kissinger.

LINCOLN: When did that occur?

Q: I have forgotten when the time was.

LINCOLN: Approximately?

Q: Although getting a place at the Council, of course, he never was a member.

LINCOLN: Well, we have never had a director as a member. It has always been ex officio.

Q: True.

LINCOLN: One or two other favorite things. I remember once being brought in on — since it has been declassified it is all right to mention, because I don't remember the subject — one of the famous rocket telegrams from Washington. President Nixon wanted to know who had released such and such a piece of information. Well, I heard in twenty-four hours from a correspondent that it had been leaked in a CIA briefing. I knew it hadn't been from us and I was pretty sure it wasn't from the embassy and I thought it was the military.

Apparently, it was a CIA briefing; the correspondent who told me what was said, who said it, where, when, and how hadn't used it. He didn't know that we and Washington were concerned. The journalists to whom it was leaked didn't know it was the specific leakage that Nixon had objected to. Rather, they thought that he objected to the CIA's constantly giving them information.

When the rocket arrived, the ambassador figured out pretty quickly who were the possibilities, including USIS, of course. He called me in as soon as he got it, within less than an hour. I was supposed to double check all our people to see if there was a possibility of leakage from them. I reported back to the Ambassador twenty-four hours later that it couldn't have come from us. I didn't tell him that I had learned where it might have come from. I will never know whether he found out or not; there was an awful lot of leakage.

One well-known correspondent for a fairly well known newspaper said to me very recently in the last year or so, “I seldom discussed a lot of the operations with you. There was a simple reason: I could get more information elsewhere.”

Q: The CIA ran its own press conferences.

LINCOLN: Yes, it sure did.

Q: Do you have any other comments about your time in Vietnam?

LINCOLN: I was fortunate in being able to review for the Richmond (Va.) Times Dispatch in 1987 the book In the Jaws of History that Bui Diem, former South Vietnamese Ambassador to the U.S., wrote about the war in Vietnam. Both in Vietnam and in the U.S., he was in the middle of what was going on. I'll quote from the review some of his principal points: “One, the South Vietnamese people, especially the leaders, bear the ultimate responsibility for the fate of their country...

“Two, American intervention seemed a natural extension of such earlier American policy actions as the Marshall Plan in Europe, the Berlin airlift and the military move against China in Korea....

“Three, subsequent strenuous U.S. opposition to the intervention often centered on the matter of morality, but in Diem's view, it was not immoral to work with an 'admittedly flawed' South Vietnamese regime....

“Four, it was still all wrong for the Americans to come in and take over. The United States should not have taken the entire burden on itself instead of searching for ways to make a decisive impact while limiting its exposure. It is in his further discussion of the last point that Bui Diem happens on the reasons the United States put little political or military trust in its ally. The financial and moral corruption Americans encountered in Vietnam was well beyond anything most had encountered before.”

As an American, I had to say this about Bui Diem's views: “Finding it practically impossible to rely on South Vietnam either militarily or politically, the Americans unsurprisingly counted ultimately on nothing more from Vietnamese leaders than a modicum of equilibrium....”

We could not rely on the South Vietnamese, and thus were in a hopeless quandary: to support South Vietnamese democracy, we had to rely at least to some degree on them to carry the ball; if and when they failed, we were not in a position to carry it ourselves alone. Vietnam was their country and we neither could nor should take it over.

Summation of Recommendations Re USIS Type Activities in a Vietnam Type War

Q: Anything else?

LINCOLN: Two among the major assertions I have been making should be repeated. First, the United States should not get involved in an overseas war operation for which there isn't strong domestic support.

Second, the U.S. government should never accidentally or otherwise get itself in the position of turning over so much of a political operation to the military. I believe we did both of those things in Vietnam. I think it was terribly regrettable. Perhaps one other item should be underscored, and that is that as much as we criticize any number of things that Nixon may have done, he was after all the man responsible for finding a way out of Vietnam for the United States.

Everybody said that it wasn't perfect and of course it wasn't. But the idea of so many of the opposition here in the U.S. - the demonstrators, the newspapers, et cetera - that the U.S. should just pull out, I think, was all wrong. I feel that we had a responsibility to a whole lot of Vietnamese people and to a lot of other foreign people to stick it out and try to leave gracefully.

Q: I think the main thing -

LINCOLN: We did, after all, effect a peace conference and the Paris peace conference — let's see, it was February 1973 that peace was declared. It wasn't perfect but what else could you do from the U.S. standpoint?

Q: The only other thing I think we might have done, once they were well along with that peace process, was to devise a better way to rescue a lot of the Vietnamese who had been with us and whom we knew would be left to the mercy of North Vietnam ultimately — of course, we couldn't admit that that was going to be the case but we had to know it. I think we should have made better arrangements for them.

LINCOLN: I couldn't agree with you more, because there were any number of Vietnamese whom I knew very well who were, one way or another, faithful to the U.S. There was one woman, for example, who was one of the more prominent Vietnamese women, who, when her husband was assassinated while I was in Saigon, worked for USIS at the binational center. She got out of Vietnam at the last minute. She got out through the quiet influence of the wife of the chief political officer, not through USIS or other people who were directly responsible. She was darned lucky to have gotten out.

Q: She sure was.

LINCOLN: She knows it. I have often talked with her since. I don't know where she is today, but I used to see her quite often.

Q: The Ambassador didn't do much to help the Vietnamese employees.

LINCOLN: No. John Hogan said, before he died last year, that he lays a lot of the responsibility for the difficulties at the feet of Ambassador Graham Martin.

Q: Lots of people feel that way.

LINCOLN: I didn't know Martin.

Q: I know him because he was ambassador in Thailand the first four months I was there.

LINCOLN: Oh, really?

Q: I had known him briefly before, but not well, just to say hello to.

LINCOLN: Mim Johnson, now heading the concerned USIA Alumni Association Committee, has come up with suggestions about how we should try to take care of some of the people who worked for USIS who were left in Vietnam. I am not sure that she has the answer, but this is an illustration of the problem we still face.

End of interview